

B the *Summer 2015* BEACON



"A new beginning"

Anniversaries in July, August, September

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Congratulations
to all of you who
have been here for
5 years or more!

Aurora
community services

CEO Corner

by Dave Barnard

As many of you know I love parables - teaching stories. In parables we often find the ability to simply understand what are sometimes complex concepts. The parable of the two frogs is one I have always appreciated for its' simple yet clear message. It goes like this:

A group of frogs were hopping contentedly through the woods, going about their froggy business, when two of them fell into a deep pit. All of the other frogs gathered around the pit to see what could be done to help their companions. When they saw how deep the pit was, the rest of the dismayed group agreed that it was hopeless and told the two frogs in the pit that they should prepare themselves for their fate, because they were as good as dead. Unwilling to accept this terrible fate, the two frogs began to jump with all of their might. Some of the frogs shouted into the pit that it was hopeless, and that the two frogs wouldn't be in that situation if they had been more careful, more obedient to the froggy rules, and more responsible.

The other frogs continued sorrowfully shouting that they should save their energy and give up, since they were already as good as dead. The two frogs continued jumping as hard as they could, and after several hours of desperate effort were quite weary. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to the calls of his fellow frogs. Spent and disheartened, he quietly resolved himself to his fate, lay down at the bottom of the pit, and died as the others looked on in helpless grief.

The other frog continued to jump with every ounce of energy he had, although his body was wracked with pain and he was completely exhausted. His companions began anew, yelling for him to accept his fate, stop the pain and just die. The weary frog jumped harder and harder and - wonder of wonders - finally leapt so high that he sprang from the pit.

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Amazed, the other frogs celebrated his miraculous freedom and then gathering around him asked, "Why did you continue jumping when we told you it was impossible?" Reading their lips, the astonished frog explained to them that he was deaf, and that when he saw their gestures and shouting, he thought they were cheering him on. What he had perceived as encouragement inspired him to try harder and to succeed against all odds.

This simple story contains a powerful lesson. Encouraging words can lift someone up and help them make it through the day. Destructive words can cause deep wounds; they may be what destroys someone's desire to continue trying. Destructive, careless words can diminish someone in the eyes of others and have a lasting impact on the way others respond to them.

Encouraging, positive words can raise someone up and help them achieve things they did not know were possible.

Many of those we serve heard discouraging and malicious words from many for periods of their lives. Thanks to people like you, Aurora's staff, they now hear encouraging, positive words that help them live their lives to the fullest.

Thanks for all that you do to help lift those we serve to greater heights in quality of life and happiness!

You are the best!

Dave

Star of the Quarter



Hayley Suckow, is the Star of the Quarter!

Hayley Suckow is the winner of the Star of the Quarter for the second quarter. Hayley is a Vocational Coordinator in the Central Region. She was nominated by two of her peers who have the utmost respect for her. Hayley has been employed with Aurora since 2013. She began as a job developer in the Eau Claire area and transitioned to a Vocational Coordinator in Menomonie.

She was nominated because of her dedication to Aurora, the staff she supervises and most importantly the consumers she works with and for whom she is an uncompromising advocate.



Pictured left to right: Chris Thomason, Hayley Suckow, Eric Olson

She is also a fair and accommodating supervisor, often changing her schedule outside of work to make herself available for staff. Her supervisor Terri Bollinger had this to say about her: "Hayley is truly a compassionate advocate for consumers and coworkers. She goes above and beyond everyday to make sure the job gets done, and will be an asset in any of her life endeavors."

When asked what she likes best about working at Aurora, Hayley said "obviously working with the consumers and helping people find work they enjoy." In her free time, she enjoys kayaking with her coworkers, running - a passion of hers, coaching track, spending time with her boyfriend and with her new baby niece. Thank you Hayley for being your BEST everyday!



With just over two years of experience at Aurora, **Jessica Checkalski** has experienced a little bit of everything working in the Accounting Department at the Corporate Office in Menomonie, WI. Jessica started in accounts payable, moved into benefits, and recently moved into a very important position: payroll!

We can probably all agree on the importance of the payroll position, seeing we all like to get paid. What might be viewed as daunting by other people was seen as a challenge by Jessica. She had a bit of exposure to the payroll job because she was trained in to be a back up for the task. "Crazy enough, I liked it," Jessica

said of her experience. She expressed her interest to her supervisor hoping that maybe in the next five years, she'd get an opportunity to do the job due to potential retirements. She got a big surprise when the position unexpectedly opened up only five months later!

At first, Jessica was nervous about the job, but then she started to think of it as keeping Aurora's "ducks in a row." This has become a theme of her work and even part of the décor, with a gift of rubber ducks in a row, displayed in her office! Jessica says that keeping those ducks in a row has been much easier due to the strong, standardized processes already in place for payroll and all of accounting!

Away from work, Jessica is a mother to two young men, Hunter (12) and Gunner (10). She lives in Colfax, WI and enjoys spending time in the outdoors, especially fishing or playing softball.

When asked to sum up her experience at Aurora so far, Jessica responded that she absolutely loves everything about her job. "I love coming to work," she said!

Employee of the Quarter



Kathleen Smith, is the Employee of the Quarter!

Kathleen Smith is the Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter. Kathleen first began working for Aurora in 2011, but resigned in 2013. She came back as a rehire in March of 2014. She is a CLA at operation 118 in Waupaca. Kathleen was nominated for EOTQ because she has been key to keeping operation 118 staffed. Kathleen has gone above and beyond to make sure the house is staffed, the consumers are happy and well, and the house is clean.

She even comes in when she is not scheduled to assist new staff when they need help. The PM at 118 had this to say about Kathleen, "I cannot begin to explain how valuable she is to myself, this operation, consumers, staff and Aurora."

When asked what she likes best about working at Aurora Kathleen said "I love working with the consumers." She now works the NOC shift so she

doesn't get to participate in as many activities, but she enjoyed taking the consumers to fairs and car shows. Her compassion for others doesn't end there.

When Kathleen isn't at work her hobby is her love of animals. She enjoys spending time with her new pet, a hedgehog named Lola. We thank Kathleen for her dedication to Aurora and the people we serve, and for being a great staff. Thanks Kathleen for all that you do!





Justin is 43 years old and a resident of Onalaska, WI. He's a WCC member who has received services through Aurora since May 2011. Justin receives a wake up call and three medication reminders each day through the Call Center.

morning." When he travels out of state, the Call Center changes his medication reminders to work with a new time zone.

Justin feels like working with his Program Director, Demetrius, has a large impact on his life. He appreciates having someone to talk to about work or life issues. He has learned more about living with Asperger Syndrome and reading the facial and body language of others.

Aurora's services help Justin maintain his independent lifestyle. Just like staff, he drives his own car, lives in a townhouse and has a job at Toys-R-Us where he is doing an outstanding job! Justin is the employee of the month for August! He was recognized for selling the most protection plans in a week. He sold 13, which is a challenging goal. In addition, he continues to impress his managers by being one of the top sellers for the rewards card program for Toys-R-Us.

He also works with Aurora

Program Director, Demetrius Banks, and, when needed, Regional Coordinator, Stacy Masters.

Justin states he believes the telephonic medication reminders he receives are vital, as he often loses track of time and would forget to take medications. He likes the flexibility of working with the Call Center for his wake up call so he can change the time each day, to better fit his work schedule, as his medications cause him to sleep very heavily. Justin states the wake up calls are, "very helpful...they really get me going in the

Justin feels comfortable talking to Call Center staff about some of his favorite things, including action movies, Xbox games, and watching MMA fights. He collects comic books, plays video games and enjoys bowling, traveling and movies. He's also been involved in the community in supporting his political party by volunteering at campaign headquarters. He's a smart, funny guy who enjoys joking with Call Center staff. Justin is a busy guy but never too busy to say, "thank you" before ending a call!

Chef on a shoestring

Try this new recipe from Marty Heitkamp, REALiving's *Chef on a Shoestring*! At REALiving we are always trying to find healthy, inexpensive, quick recipes! Hope you all enjoy this one!

Overnight Oatmeal

1/3 c milk	1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 c rolled oats	2 tsp chia seeds
1/4 c greek yogurt	1/4 c fresh berries (your choice)
2 tsp honey	

Combine milk, oats, greek yogurt, chia seeds, honey and cinnamon in half pint jar with a lid. Shake to mix then fold in your fresh berries. Refrigerate overnight or at least eight hours. This recipe can be altered many ways, so use your imagination. **Enjoy!**